

SENATE BILL REPORT

SHB 2287

As of February 25, 2016

Title: An act relating to providing notice to first responders that a person with a disability may be present at the scene of an emergency.

Brief Description: Providing notice to first responders that a person with a disability may be present at the scene of an emergency.

Sponsors: House Committee on Judiciary (originally sponsored by Representatives McCabe, Appleton, Johnson, Wylie, Dye, Walsh, Dent, Wilson, Kagi, Caldier, Haler, Kochmar and Senn).

Brief History: Passed House: 2/15/16, 96-1.

Committee Activity: Human Services, Mental Health & Housing: 2/22/16.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES, MENTAL HEALTH & HOUSING

Staff: Kevin Black (786-7747)

Background: The phone number 911 is the national emergency phone number in the United States. The enhanced 911 system (E911) is the result of a 1991 voter referendum directing enhanced 911 emergency communications systems to be available statewide. The office coordinating the E911 is located within the Emergency Management Division of the Washington Military Department.

The Department of Health (DOH) is tasked with setting minimum standards and establishing training for numerous health care professionals and services, including first responders and emergency medical technicians. The Secretary of the DOH (Secretary) must prescribe procedures for certification and decertification, requirements for training curriculum, and standards for ongoing training and evaluation. The Secretary must also set minimum requirements for liability insurance to be carried by licensed services excluding public bodies.

The Adjutant General, commander of all Washington Army and Air National Guard forces, is the Director of the Military Department. The E911 Advisory Committee, established in 2010, assists the state E911 coordinator in facilitating the operation of E911. Its members are appointed by the Adjutant General and include individuals from the Washington State

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Association of Fire Chiefs, Washington Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs (WASPC), and the Washington State Patrol (WSP), among others.

Summary of Bill: DOH must design a training program for first responders and 911 personnel to familiarize them with best techniques for confronting persons with disabilities in an emergency situation. DOH must collaborate with the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS), the Washington State Patrol (WSP), the Washington Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs (WASPC), and the Superintendent of Public Instruction. The purpose of the program is to maximize the safety and minimize the likelihood of injury to persons with disabilities and others who are present at the scene of an emergency. Program components must include:

- a checklist of disabilities and their symptoms;
- things to do and not do relevant to a particular disability.

A person with a disability means a person diagnosed with a physical, mental, emotional, behavioral, developmental, or sensory disability. DOH must make the program available to all first responder agencies in the state.

The Director of the State Military Department, through the E911 coordinator, must collaborate with DOH, DSHS, WSP, WASPC, and others at the Director's discretion to assess the capacity to incorporate information about a person with a disability who may be associated with an emergency into the E911 service. Information must include:

- emergency contact information for others who may have information about the person with a disability, including siblings, grandparents, friends, or neighbors;
- information about alternative residences and vehicles for the person;
- detailed information regarding the disability including a picture an physical description, and
- the name, address, and phone number of the diagnosing physician.

The Director's assessment must include recommendations how to acquire the information, to safeguard privacy, to allow for periodic updates to keep the information current, and to provide liability protection to first responder agencies and their employees for acts and omissions related to this information.

This act must be known as the Travis Alert Act.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: My constituent's biggest fear is that an emergency will happen and first responders won't know how to care for her autistic son. This can head-off problems. We made this a special needs bill, not just autism, because we received so many calls from people concerned about their needs. We need both the alert and

the training. The alert would help EMTs prepare for calls and prepare with the right information. Sometimes I wander away from my family. Sometimes I get into trouble and need help. Will you please help me? It makes me nervous to have a brother and to not always know if I can help him. Kids who have to take care of their siblings and parents and grandparents will have a load taken off their shoulders. The Travis Alert would help firefighters do our jobs. The training helps us give the best care we can to those in need. Law enforcement training doesn't have training to help interact with persons with disabilities.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Representative McCabe, prime sponsor; Threasa King, mother; Travis King; Bryan Bauer, fire fighter; Darren King, EMT; Dakota Bauer, supporter; Tyler King, brother; Diana Stadden, ARC of WA State.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: No one.